

Eco-Community Dialogues Newsletter

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Cheers

Last Friday the U.S. Senate removed the notorious "*Farmer Protection Provision*" rider, better known as the "*Monsanto Protection Act*" from the federal budget bill. An attitude of gratitude adds joy to the Autumnal season.

Get Your iPhone App On

Now that the U.S. food supply is threatened by die-off of pollinating honeybees, many non-profits are working hard to raise awareness about poisonous residues on foods. The PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK (PAN) offers an **iPhone app called "What's On My Food"** at www.whatsonmyfood.org. The iPhone app is important because now you can use it in your grocery store aisles to help you decide. The "*What's On My Food*" iPhone app data base gives information at your fingertips.

Did you know the iPhone app's database informs citizens that 46 different chemical residues are likely on collard, in the form of nine carcinogens, 25 hormone disruptors, 10 neurotoxins, and eight developmental/reproductive toxins, as well as 25 compounds known to be harmful to honeybees. But organic collard is grown without the use of agrochemicals. So it is NOT just about the bees, isn't it.

Food toxicology ends up in your bloodstream. Physician Andrew Weil voices additional concerns about how agrochemical toxins contaminate groundwater, promote erosion, and ruin soil structures. There is scientific consensus that agrochemical farms are a public health problem. Dr. Weil's medical opinion is to avoid food produced using chemical inputs. The toxic residues adversely affect health, especially during fetal development and childhood.

You may be able to at least go organic with the "*Dirty Dozen*" list of fruit and vegetables listed by the nonprofit ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP (EWG): Apples, bell peppers, blueberries, celery, collard greens, grapes, kale, lettuces, nectarines, potatoes, strawberries, and spinach. With the "*Dirty Dozen*" there is only one best option and it is to choose *USDA Certified Organic*.

In the field of all possibility, *Jackson County* citizens may vote "Yes" on *Measure 15-119* on the May 2014 ballot, in order to keep their options and choices open for local organic growers to have the right to farm, rather than be harmed by agrochemical practices overtaking OREGON territory as happened in the Midwest with the GMO monocrop take-over of the U.S. Farm Belt. *Who knows how county voters will decide.*

(Source: September 30, 2013 DAILY TIMES, Earth Talk, "*Seeking pesticide information?*" by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss with *E-The Environmental Magazine*; www.emagazine.com; earthtalk@emagazine.com; www.drweil.com; PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK (PAN), "*What's On My Food*"; and THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP at www.ewg.org)

A Frog Went Walking

Lest we forget, in August 1995, a class of MINNESOTA middle-school students on a field trip to a farm wetland found frogs with legs missing or deformed. The MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY was notified and reports of deformed frogs from the *St. Lawrence River* valley in QUEBEC, the *Great Lakes* region, *New England*, the *Pacific Northwest* became widely publicized.

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Biochemist *James Burkhart* with the NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES led group of researchers and other scientists reported that chemical or chemical combinations were the most likely culprits. Their report was published in the December 1998 "*Environmental Health Perspectives*". The deformed frogs led to suspicion of chemicals as endocrine system disruptors. Research in CANADA outside of *Montreal* had identified the main cause of frog deformations as agrochemical pesticides.

Veterinarian *Martin Ouellet* tracked the health of frogs on farms that used pesticides in the *St. Lawrence River* valley. He found a variety of deformities, including missing and malformed legs, so he continued to examine 100 more ponds with 30,000 frogs. In the ponds exposed to pesticides through spraying drift, runoff, or careless disposal of pesticide containers, about 20 percent of all frogs were deformed, compared with less than 2 percent in control ponds that were unexposed to pesticides. In his area he established pesticides as a strong corollary of deformities.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY scientists and the CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE then got together with Veterinarian *Ouellet* and the team of scientists examined the genetic condition of *St. Lawrence River* valley frogs. They scientifically established the fact that pesticide-laden ponds were causative of abnormal DNA profiles in frogs, whether or not the frogs had obvious deformities. The ponds studied were tainted with CARBOFURAN, used on CORN CROPS, and AZINOPHOS-METHYL, used on POTATO FIELDS.

The Veterinarian believed that by specifying exactly which ingredients it would hurt the frogs since agrochemicals are a mixed cocktail of pesticides.

A separate study in CANADA concluded that in addition to altered DNA and deformities, exposure to the pesticide ENDOSULFAN at very low levels of aerial spraying drift was causative of lethargy and twitching in tadpoles.

It's been nearly two decades since scientists narrowed in on pesticides as the cause of *deformities*. In the meantime where have all the frogs gone.

(Source: March/April 1990, SIERRA, "What's Wrong With The Frogs?" by *Katherine Phillips*)

Wetland Preservation

Bogs, floodplains, mangroves, marshes, rice fields, and swamps are examples of vital wetlands. Half of the list of U.S. "*Endangered species*" at some time during their lives need to use wetlands, and over a third of the list lives ONLY in wetlands.

In addition to being the beneficial habitat for endangered species, wetlands provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Animal and plant species are disproportionately high in wetlands, compared to other land communities.

WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL is a global nonprofit dedicated to the conservation and restoration of the wetlands that are deteriorating or being lost at high speed in all regions of the world, due to climate change and land development expansion. The loss of wetlands is at the forefront of municipal land-use planning meetings and zoning debates. Many municipalities include wetlands conservation in their development permitting and zoning processes.

Water saturation is the definitive characteristic of wetland soil. Wetlands feed downstream waters. Wetlands renew supplies of groundwater by trapping floodwaters. They also confiscate pollution and the federal government does what it can to protect water by passing the CLEAN WATER ACT.

At the state level, laws are being passed in several states for wetland regulation, because of how vital wetlands are. Local wetlands need to stop being viewed as marginal, unproductive lands targeted for drainage and development conversion. You may contact www.wetlands.org to help educate policy-makers to improve local wetland policies.

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The eyes of the world are on wetlands zoning laws and if they look amiss or damaging to wetlands it gets voiced, because sooner is better than later. Citizens may contact the ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA Wetlands, water).

The federal CLEAN WATER ACT provides fair and equitable TAX INCENTIVES for giving or selling wetlands to:

1. Conservation groups via cooperative efforts with local and state entities.
2. Land trusts.
3. The federal government to add acreage to the public lands systems.

(Source: August 20, 2013, DAILY TIDINGS, Earth Talk, "Wetlands Play Key Role" by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss, E-The Environmental Magazine; www.emagazine.com; epa.gov/type/wetlands/; www.wetlands.org)

Red Flags

Environmental groups have been pressing the ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) to ban NEONICS from contaminating groundwater and surface water at levels expected to harm aquatic food chains. NEONICOTINOID products are highly prone to runoff and groundwater infiltration. Even a single seed treated with some NEONICOTINOIDS can kill a bird that eats it.

A 2012 study by scientists in JAPAN concluded that these very persistent, systemic insecticides may be potent risks to **human health**. Systemic means the chemical is taken up inside the plants and you can't wash it off or peel it away.

The researchers found that NEONICOTINOIDS act on the *brain cells* in the same way as NICOTINE exposure, which is a known *risk factor* for adverse effects on children, including sudden infant death syndrome, low birth weight, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Several other countries have already banned NEONICOTINOIDS, and it is pathetic that U.S. regulators allow additional uses of these insecticides to be heavily applied, despite the **human health risks**.

(Source: June/July 2013 MOTHER EARTH NEWS, "Buy Organic; Reject Poisons"; March 2013 AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY report, "Impact of the Nation's Most Widely Used Insecticides on Birds"; www.BeyondPesticides.org; www.PANNA.org)

The Busy Bees

The U.S. bee population has dropped by an average of 30 percent every year, while one of every three bites of food you consume depends on honeybee pollination. *Bees are very important.*

Two years ago in 2011, MONSANTO purchased an Israeli bee research firm.

Last year PURDUE UNIVERSITY published *Christian Krupke's* implication that NEONICOTINOID treated seed is a corollary to massive bee die-offs. GMO corn growers spew NEONICOTINOID behind the planters and it blows in the air, landing directly on bees as well as dandelions.

In June 2012, HARVARD published in the BULLETIN OF INSECTOLOGY that NEONICOTINOIDS are a main culprit of the *Colony Collapse Disorder* of the bees.

Contentious *Gene Robinson*, Director of the "Bee Research Facility" at the UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, claims the subject is *controversial*, so in May, 2013, the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) issued a report claiming complexity causation. But the subject is NOT open to controversy by the 27 EU countries because on April 29, THE EUROPEAN UNION banned NEONICOTINOID chemical compounds for two-years.

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It just so happens that BAYER CROPSCIENCE and SYNGENTA AG are the manufacturers of NEONICOTINOIDS and are responsible for the comprehensive use of NEONICOTINOIDS as seed coatings on U.S. corn and U.S. soybeans, which are GMO's developed by MONSANTO COMPANY. NEONOCOTINOID insecticides prevailed last decade as the most widely used insecticides on the planet, but they are highly toxic to bees.

BAYER's Director of "Environmental Toxicity and Risk Assessment", Dave Fischer, flatly denied any correlation between the NEONICOTINOIDS it produces and "Bee Health". True as stated. NEONICOTINOIDS have NOT been linked to "healthy" bees. Isn't it interesting how tricky use of words enabled BAYER's Director to skirt the issue, perhaps because BAYER has to bring in 70,000 hives a year to pollinate its *Canola* crops in CANADA, and that is a poor business model because of die-off of the local bees.

Entomologist Maria Spivak, at the UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA is a leading U.S. bee researcher, and she implicates industrial agriculture's single GMO crop practices for systematically eliminating the flowers that bees require for nutrition and survival. Bee mites and viruses are symptomatic of the *chemically dependent* GMO industrial agriculture practices of monocultures that have locked up the U.S. Farm Belt. Industrial agricultural practices use lots of biocides because insect pests feed on monoculture. The chemical poisons upset the balance of nature. Therefore it is Man who is endangering pollinators.

MONSANTO's Israeli bee research firm recently hosted at its Creve Coeur headquarters, a "Bee Health" conference for industry. We now know that Jerry Hayes was hired to run MONSANTO's bee research, and that BAYER CROPSCIENCE's "Bee Health" center is located in NORTH CAROLINA.

BAYER CROPSCIENCE has buddied up with SYNGENTA AG to develop a comprehensive action plan. The word "comprehensive" means "all-inclusive," "completely full", and "widespread".

MONSANTO COMPANY has meanwhile purchased SEMINIS, the largest U.S. fruit and vegetable seed producer. SEMINIS seeds depend upon pollinators, and up to \$20 billion in U.S. crops are beholden to the bees. MONSANTO now therefore has financial interest in marketing conventional seeds. If the earthworms are the champions of the world, the bees may be its saviors.

(June 16, 2013 MAIL TRIBUNE, "Corporate agriculture giants buzzing to solve bee deaths, too", by Georgina Gustin, SAINT LOUIS POST-DISPATCH)

Game's On

The ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION sent out an email alert this summer about MONSANTO's GMO game being focused primarily in PORTUGAL and SPAIN, which are both countries in EUROPE where there remains one MONSANTO crop, the cultivation of GMO corn. So MONSANTO still has a toe hold with the EUROPEAN UNION.

Organic consumers were urged to pay attention because MONSANTO COMPANY has a history of being relentless in its game of principally propagandizing politicians as well as farmers. Now the spotlight is on MONSANTO's breeding and selling of *conventional non-GMO* seed contracts to the EUROPEAN UNION farmers. Farmers who buy the *conventional* seeds are bound by license agreements to use plant protection chemicals that are highly toxic, and that guarantees MONSANTO European monies. MONSANTO COMPANY's sales of conventional corn, conventional canola, and conventional vegetable seeds are strong in EUROPE. It may be a ploy to get the EUROPEAN UNION to allow GMO's.

Watch and pray as they say.

(Source: www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_27682.cfm, "Monsanto's Deception Game on GMO in Europe"; June 5, 2013 RUSSIAN TIMES)

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Whodunit?

CANADA supplies most of the world's flax and REIMERS SEED COMPANY supplies organic flax seeds to farmers. It's Manager, *Ernie Hoffert*, implicates both the Canadian government and biotech for causing market problems and irreversible damage has already been done to the Canadian flax market. He advises organic consumers that, if a company won't verify the genetic status of flax, avoid it. Look for *Non-GMO Verified* or *Certified Organic* seals because those flax products have been tested by their manufacturers for purity and integrity and verified to be clean.

Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator of the CANADIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY ACTION NETWORK, claims GMO contamination is inevitable and costs taxpayers recurring expense. The problem is that GMO FP967 flax was developed in the late 1980's by DEVELOPMENT CENTRE in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA.

In the late 1990's FP967 was marketed as TRIFFID in both CANADA and the U.S. , but it's authorization was stopped when the **European export market** raised **safety concerns** that prevented commercial production and sales of TRIFFID. It was de-registered by 2001, over a decade ago, and all known seed was believed to have been identified and destroyed. But TRIFFID is still showing up in 2013, over a decade later, continually jeopardizing the flax market of CANADA.

The GM CONTAMINATION REGISTER, a joint venture of GENEWATCH UK and GREENPEACE, reported that the GMO flax turned up first in GERMANY in late 2009. It has since turned up in AUSTRIA, CYPRUS, FINLAND, FRANCE, GREECE, ITALY, LUXEMBOURG, ROMANIA, SLOVENIA, SWEDEN, and SWITZERLAND as well as dozens of other mostly European countries. During the past few years unauthorized GMO flax was identified in at least 30 countries worldwide.

Similarly there are rumors that the USDA is unable to determine responsibility for three unapproved leftover rice strains that BAYER CROP SCIENCE seems to have used in U.S. field trials a few years back, when the unauthorized rice somehow got exported to over 30 countries also. The GM CONTAMINATION REGISTER's report, "GMO Myths and Truths" news blurb leaves it open-ended about whether the unauthorized rice was inadvertently mixed during storage, has been spread by farm machinery, or has since cross-pollinated the world's general rice supply.

The common denominator with both is that neither unauthorized flax nor rice strains were kept from contaminating the food supplies of scores of other countries, without their informed consent, and there seems to be no effective means for redress of grievances.

(Source: <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2013/07/08-7>; July 8, 2013 COMMON DREAMS, "Unauthorized GM Rice Threatens World Supply", by Lauren McCauley; June 24, 2013, NATURAL NEWS NEWSLETTER, "Unauthorized genetically-modified flax found to have been exported to more than 30 countries around the world" by Jonathan Benson; <http://www.cban.ca>; http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/sept06/flax_seed.php; <http://www.cban.ca>)

Walk on By

The patenting of *Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's)* goes all the way back to the 1980's, by MONSANTO and PFIZER INC. Some patents are so old that they either expired or are about to expire.

The MYRIAD GENETICS case that was recently decided by the U.S. SUPREME COURT Judge Thomas. MYRIAD GENETICS was sided with by *Hans Sauer*, the General Counsel at the "Biotechnology Industry Organization" which is the **lobbyist group** for MONSANTO and other big biotech corporations.

The SUPREME COURT RULING invalidated patents for *natural* DNA, while upholding patents for cDNA genetics. Legal protection for ongoing patenting on genes means the chemical Goliaths will keep on making more and more synthetic drugs to patent. It's very lucrative. For example, cDNA proteins are used in *human growth hormone* and *insulin*. The bottom line is that there are still tens of thousands of patents that the chemical industry says are NOT products of nature.

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Law Professor, *Robert Field*, at DREXEL UNIVERSITY confided that the original gene patent prototypes were simple gene patents that referred to just the chemical sequence of a gene combination of the letters A, T, C, and G.

In 2003, public domain patents changed gears when the *Human Genome Project* implicated a 3-billion-letters-long DNA sequence was up for patent grabs. The *Human Genome Sciences* held a lion's share of patents up until last year when the giant GLAXOSMITHKLINE Corporation bought *Human Genome Sciences*.

Attorney *Bill Gaede* with MCDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP in Menlo Park, CALIFORNIA, implicates what is *naturally* found is tweaked slightly in order to get patented as laboratory made. Examples cited are DUPONT's "*Pioneer Hi-Bred*" division and MONSANTO.

Furthermore, *Gregory Graff*, a professor at COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY, led an analysis of gene patents that was published in this year's May issue of NATURE BIOTECHNOLOGY. According to Graff, natural DNA molecule proteins that kill bugs were patented as synthetic cDNA.

According to *Sharon Begley* new cancer treatment drugs *FUEL THE MALIGNANCY* in tumors. She warns cancer patients to first be tested to see if their tumor has the particular genetic mutation that the new drugs target. She implicates PFIZER INC'S patented lung cancer drug called XALKORI, by claiming XALKORI targets a gene mutation called ALK, and ABBOTT LABORATORIES makes the XALKORI for PFIZER INC. The same ABBOTT LAB tests to see if patients do have the mutation. Her point is to consider getting tested for ALK by a different company before consenting to XALKORI. Begley further asserts that NOVO NORDISK and ROCHE HOLDING AG'S GENENTECH corporations both hold DNA patents that make vaccine antigens.

(Sources: Summer 2013 VISION magazine's EYE ON THE NEWS "*Related stories from Reuters*"—"As Top Court Invalidates Some Gene Patents, Biotech Has Moved On.", by *Sharon Begley*; NEW YORK, June 13, 2013, REUTERS/Paul Hackett/Files; Summer 2010 VISION "*in the Zone*"; Summer 2006 VISION, "*Small Concerns*"; Spring 2006 VISION, "*The Sickness Business*"; Winter 2006 VISION, "*Seeds of Discord*", and "*Ethical Concerns*"; www.vision.org on-line articles "*The New Synthesis*" and "*Synthetic Genomics Build it and They Will Come*")

The Good News

Organic growers have proven crops can be grown in a better, more sustainable way. Food can be produced without resorting to poisons. Most importantly consumer demand for organic continues to grow steadily. Every time you choose to buy organic, you are persuading more farmers to grow organic. Your purchase adds incentive for other farmers to reject toxic agricultural chemical war against Nature.

Grandmothers might also enjoy subscribing to SIERRA, the magazine of the SIERRA CLUB. Their mission statement is to *explore, enjoy, and protect* the wild places of the earth. It was an old March/April 1999 SIERRA article, "*Digging Deeper*" by *Reed McManus*, that coined the term, "*EXPLORNOGRAPHY*" to disapprove of Man's exploitation of Earth's natural resources. Over the years the SIERRA CLUB has done much to advocate FOR responsible behavior among outdoor enthusiasts learning that protecting Nature is *enjoyable*. Your book group might want to read and discuss the book **LIGHTEN UP! A complete handbook for LIGHT & ULTRALIGHT backpacking**, by *Don Ladigin*.

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